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**House Subcommittee on Management, Integration, and Oversight
Training More Border Patrol Agents: How the Department of Homeland Security Can
Increase Training Capacity Most Effectively**

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Congressman Meek, and Committees Members for the opportunity to explore with you concerns surrounding our border security. It is an honor for me to appear before you today. I hope that my testimony is helpful to the committee in determining how we can most effectively train more Border Patrol Agents.

Our Border Patrol agents have a daunting, overwhelming task; provide security for thousands of miles of border to prevent terrorist activity, illegal immigration, and drug trafficking. I look forward to discussing ways Blackwater may be able to assist in making this daunting task to secure our borders more effective.

Blackwater was founded in 1997 from a clear vision of the need for innovative, flexible training and security solutions in support of national and global security challenges.

Both the military and law enforcement agencies needed additional capacity to fully train their personnel to the standards required to keep our country secure. Because the constraints on training venues continued to increase, Blackwater believed that the U.S. Government would embrace outsourcing of quality training. We built Blackwater's facility in North Carolina to provide the capacity that we thought our government would need to meet its future training requirements.

Over the years, Blackwater (www.blackwaterusa.com) has become only an industry leader in training, but at the cutting edge in five additional business units: Blackwater Target Systems, Blackwater Security Consulting, Blackwater Aviation Worldwide Services, Blackwater Canine, and Raven Development Group.

Blackwater is the nation's largest private tactical and firearms training facility. Our 6000 acre facility was ready when the country needed it. The bombing of the USS Cole in Yemen had sent a ripple through the U.S. Navy, and after the tragedy of September 11, 2001, that ripple was felt worldwide. The Navy appropriately responded realizing that in order to combat today's terrorist threat, *all* Sailors would need substantial training in basic and advanced force protection techniques. The Navy moved swiftly to create a sound training program, but realized that it did not have the requisite infrastructure or capacity to execute its plan.

Because of our ability to support our government's emergent and compelling needs, Blackwater was selected in an open and competitive bid to assist the Navy and we now execute and manage that contract all over the country. Sailors the world over are now better prepared to identify, appropriately engage, and defeat would-be attacks on naval vessels in port and underway. To date, Blackwater has trained approximately 35,000 Sailors.

As we grew, we quickly realized the value to the government of “one-stop shopping”. While there are other companies who offer one or two distinct training services, none of them offer all of our services, and certainly not at one location. The importance of this cannot be overstated; being able to conduct training at a centralized locality is the most cost-effective, efficient way of ensuring that new federal law enforcement agents are trained to the level demanded by today’s national and homeland security challenges.

The Federal law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) can be proud of the way in which it recruits and trains our Department of Homeland Security law enforcement professionals. The sites at Glynco, Artesia, Charleston, and Cheltenham continue to be professionally managed and when the scheduled renovations and upgrades are completed, the FLETC network should be fully capable of providing the capacity needed to train the required number of agents.

As a private firm, Blackwater is not in competition with FLETC. However, as a company of committed Americans we are prepared to and fully capable of supporting the FLETC mission when surge capacity is required. We already enjoy a good relationship with FLETC. Both of our organizations benefit from the wisdom of many retired military and law enforcement professionals and we continually see people with whom we’ve worked and served with in during our government service.

Based on limited information, we have drawn up a rough order of magnitude as to what the cost would be to provide a turnkey solution to train 2,000 new Border Patrol Agents at Blackwater. That solution would cost approximately \$40,000.00 per person for the 18-week course. That is a fully burdened number that accounts for overhead, general and administrative expenses, and is based on what it costs for tactical driving, firearms, and classroom training at our facility. Further, we believe it would take us approximately one year to train all 2,000 agents.

Blackwater successfully conducts a similar public-private partnership with the Department of State to recruit, train, deploy and manage Diplomatic Security Specialists in Iraq and other areas of interest.

Securing our borders will continue to be a challenge for our nation. The urgency is clear. History repeatedly demonstrates that innovation and efficiency are what alter the strategic balance, and Blackwater offers both in support of training new Border Patrol agents.

Just as the private sector has responded in moving mail and packages around the world in a more efficient manner, so too can Blackwater respond to the CBP emergent and compelling training needs. We are committed to supporting the United States, the Department of Homeland Security, the Customs and Border Patrol Service, and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in fulfilling their missions in securing our borders and keeping all citizens safe.

I hope my brief comments have highlighted some of the alternatives available to most effectively train and augment our borders security efforts and I look forward to hearing your questions and observations.